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the lower part of the dado, the upper portion should be decorated with a frieze paper of a good, bold pattern, but of subdued coloring and of tint that harmonizes with the lower. Thus, the color used about the frieze should be the same as that on the lower part, but of a lighter shade, intermixed with some other colors that form a harmonious link between the two shades. Contrasts must be carefully avoided, but pale pinks, blues, and ambers can be blended together above a subdued gray-blue ground. The two portions of the dado should be joined together with a light wooden (black or brown) railing, or with a line of paint.

The dado decoration can be altered by placing the pattern paper upon the lower part and leaving the upper part plain colored, with or without a stencilled pattern upon it. This will suit a room where not many pictures are required, or that is already rather dark. Some part of the wall should always be in plain color, as the eye requires rest; and no pattern, however subdued in hue, can give the relief to the mind that a bit of plain coloring affords; and this scarcity of ornament in one part of the room is amply repaid by the effect it gives to such parts as are bright and should be bright. The true theory of effect is to use but one or two bright colors in a room, and to surround them by soft and subdued tints that throw up and do not destroy their brilliancy; a number of bright colors placed together destroy each other, and leave an impression on the mind of glare and vulgarity. Having settled upon your paper and ceiling, have the woodwork and cornice of the room painted either a shade lighter or darker than the walls, and shroud up the mantelpiece with curtains, of satin sheeting embroidered with crewels, and instead of the usual looking-glass over the fireplace, have a mirror surrounded with brackets holding china, or have a black wooden mantelpiece made with squares of looking-glass set in. The background of your room being thus completed in such a manner as really to be a background, your furniture will look twice as well as if it were stared out of countenance by the walls; and one need hardly add that all your friends will delight in a room that throws up and brings out their dresses and faces, instead of killing them by its glaring tints.

#### REFORM IN FRENCH DECORATION.

A REACTION is setting in at Paris against overcrowding and overdressing in interior decoration. For some time past the abuse of plush, silk, screens and objects of art and curiosity in the furnishing of Parisian apartments has been growing beyond all rea-

sonable measure. The window curtains have been tripled and the blinds have become flounced and fluffy à l'italienne, like ball-dresses. The ceilings and walls have been so crowded with hangings and mirrors and brackets laden with bronzes and porcelain that the rooms have come to resemble bazaars or museums. Then there have been Moorish bathrooms, Gothic arm-chairs, Pompadour toilettes, sedan chairs converted into cases for bibelots, beds surmounted by plumes of feathers, chimney-pieces draped

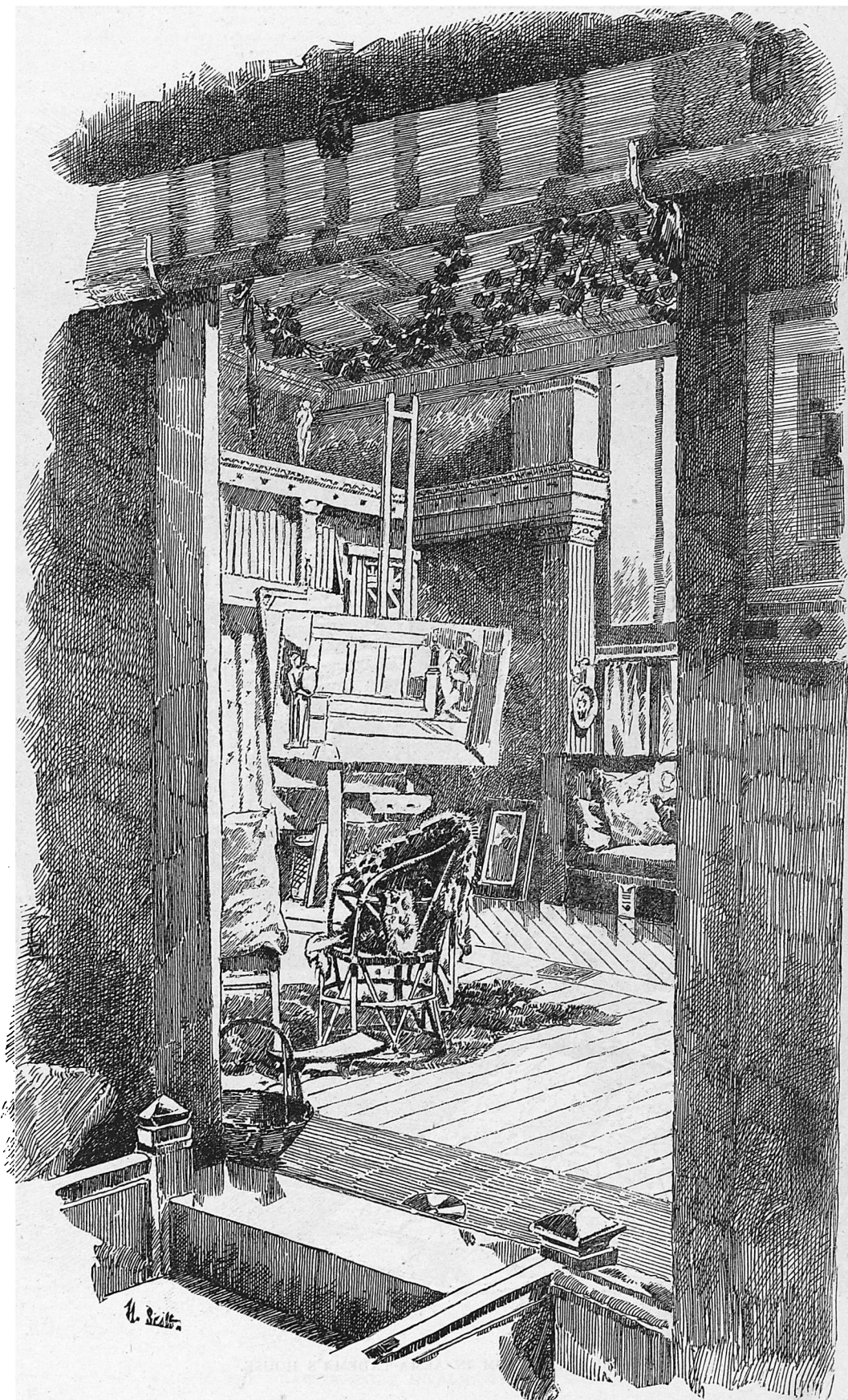
Louis XVI. style, with an admixture of the svelte and slender elegance of modern English furniture—the strictly necessary only, and that in a style of severe and distinguished elegance.

T. C.

#### FLORAL TABLE DECORATION.

THE piece of crimson velvet or plush down the centre of the table, which last year seemed to threaten to

become stereotyped and to displace all other methods of decoration at London fashionable dinners, has this year almost disappeared. Brocade is frequently used. The (London) Queen, from which we quote, says: "We have seen it at some small dinners, where it was desired that the outlay on flowers should be extremely moderate, and the effect was really excellent, the variegated colors of the brocade preventing the look of bareness which would have been inevitable with any plain material, and rendering a specimen glass before each guest ample for the floral decoration of the table. One specially pretty table of this description had the centre-piece of brown satin brocaded with yellow flowers, the edges were scalloped and finished with very narrow gold fringe. Before each guest was a specimen glass filled with buttercups and grass, and in the centre of the table was a fine old blue and white china bowl filled with the same flowers. All the china used was blue and white, and the glass engraved with the maidenhair pattern, with the exception of the hock glasses, which were of a pale shade of brownish yellow, and of the shape so familiar to us in old Flemish pictures. Another very pretty table, the decoration of which was far from costly, had a centre-piece of pale blue embossed velvet edged round with fern leaves, cornflowers, and white pinks, laid on as a wreath. Some pretty chased silver ornaments were placed upon it, and at each end was a silver cup filled with cornflowers, spiræa, and pink geranium. The silver candelabrum stood in the centre. The china was turquoise and gold, the glass quite plain except the champagne glasses, which were of a pretty shade of blue Venetian glass. The speci-



ALMA-TADEMA'S STUDIO.

men glasses were filled with the same flowers as the silver cups. Some people, who own valuable china or ivory figures, have this year begun to utilize them for dinner-table decoration. At one long table the centre-piece was of peacock-blue figured plush, edged with a thick but narrow chenille fringe. On this were placed single figures and groups of the most exquisite ivory carving, a large group forming the centre, and being surrounded by a circle of rose-red rhododendrons, so arranged that the trough which held them was invisible."